

COVID-19: Safer Spring and Summer Gatherings

Background

Central District Health (CDH) recognizes the great significance of tradition and celebration when it comes to holidays and milestones, and the desire to host or attend activities, like those that often come during the spring and summer months. However, as we continue to seek ways to balance life amidst an ongoing pandemic and increasing detection of virus variants, health and safety should continue to be at the forefront. Though the number of people choosing to get vaccinated for COVID-19 does reduce our chances of exposure and illness, CDH wants its communities to be aware that many traditional activities, in-person gatherings with people outside of your household, and travel to areas outside of your home county can greatly increase your risk for exposure to COVID-19.

This guidance is intended for those who are planning to host or attend a large gathering such as a sporting event, wedding, barbecue, fundraiser, school dance, graduation party, or other get-together.

Local and State Public Health Guidance

CDH currently has a [Public Health Advisory](#) in place for Ada, Boise, Elmore, and Valley Counties, that provides guidance and recommendations for the public to follow to protect their health and safety. Considerations include mask wearing and attending large gatherings.

The State of Idaho is currently under [Stage 3 of its Stay Healthy Guidelines](#) which recommend that, [gatherings be limited to 50 or fewer people](#), and also makes recommendations for the wearing of face coverings and physical distancing.

Gathering Attestation Forms Required for Gatherings/Events of More Than 50

Events in Boise: If your event of more than 50 people will be held in the City of Boise, [per the City of Boise's Public Health Order](#), you must submit a [COVID-19 safety plan \(form\)](#) to Central District Health for review and recommendation for approval by the City of Boise.

Events (outside of Boise) in Ada, Boise, Elmore & Valley Counties: Large events such as trade shows, weddings, sporting venues, etc. that will be held in Ada, Boise, Elmore, or Valley County with more than 50 people in attendance should submit an attestation form to CDH at least two weeks in advance of the event. (See above for any events to be held in Boise). The form must indicate that the event planner will follow the physical distancing, hygiene and gathering protocols to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Use Idaho's Protocols for Safe Gatherings and Events in consideration and planning of your event.

- ☐ More information and the forms for submission to CDH can be found at:
<https://www.cdh.idaho.gov/covid-forms.php>

If you do not feel well, have a respiratory or gastrointestinal illness, or may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, you should not host or attend in-person gatherings.

GATHERINGS & RISK FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Several factors can contribute to the likelihood of attendees being exposed to or spreading COVID-19 at large events. In combination, the following factors will create higher or lower amounts of risk:

- **Number of COVID-19 cases in your community.** High or increasing levels of COVID-19 cases in the event location or the locations the attendees are coming from increase the risk of infection and spread among attendees.
- **Exposure during travel.** Airports, airplanes, bus stations, buses, train stations, trains, public transport, gas stations, and rest stops are all places where physical distancing may be challenging and ventilation may be poor.
- **Setting of the event.** Indoor events, especially in places with poor ventilation, pose more risk than outdoor events.
- **Length of the event.** Events that last longer pose more risk than shorter events.
- **Number and crowding of people at the event.** Events with more people increase the likelihood of being exposed.
- **Behavior of attendees during an event.** Events where people engage in behaviors such as interacting with others from outside their own household, singing, shouting, not maintaining physical distancing, or not wearing masks consistently and correctly, can increase risk.

PLANNING OR HOSTING A LARGE GATHERING

In-person gatherings with those outside of your household (even if they are family members) as well as travel to areas outside of the community you live in are considered high-risk given increasing case rates in many parts of the country.

If you choose to plan a gathering that will bring together people from different households, public health asks you to consider the following safety measures.

Gathering Size

- Consider the most vulnerable attendees/family members when planning; utilize the [CDC's recommendations for hosting gatherings or cookouts](#)
- Keep the group as small as possible
Consider offering a virtual attendance option for all or part of your event to allow more people to be a part of the experience, but not in-person
- When deciding how many people to invite to the gathering, consider the amount of space you have and the ability to maintain social distancing during the event

Health & Safety

- Consider ways to reduce the number of people congregating in potentially close spaces, like a kitchen, when cooking or during clean up
- Practice social distancing and ensure everyone in attendance properly and consistently wears a mask over their nose and mouth – use CDC's guidance for [choosing safer activities](#), which outlines activities and associated risk levels for vaccinated and unvaccinated people
- Remind attendees to regularly wash hands or use hand sanitizer; place in easy to access places at your venue
- Discourage greeting others with physical contact (e.g. handshakes)
- Use reminder signs about frequent hand hygiene and physical distancing; consider regular announcements to attendees as reminders
- Consider using paper goods that can be disposed of
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces frequently and any shared items between use; develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning

- If having an indoor gathering, improve ventilation by opening doors and windows as much as possible; keep in mind that while outdoor activities are safer than indoor activities, the virus can still spread outdoors
- Anyone invited or associated with the gathering or event that does not feel well, has recently been around someone with COVID-19, or is awaiting a test result, should not attend or help with the gathering
 - Ensure that any vendors or people who will be helping with the gathering understand this expectation
- Consider developing flexible refund policies for attendees for events that involve a participation fee
- Maintain documentation of attendees

ATTENDING AND/OR TRAVELING TO AN EVENT

- [Wear a mask](#) when around people who don't live in your household to reduce the risk of spreading the virus - use CDC's guidance for [choosing safer activities](#), which outlines activities and associated risk levels for vaccinated and unvaccinated people
- Avoid singing, chanting, or shouting, especially when not wearing a mask and within 6 feet of others
- If you or anyone in your household does not feel well, has recently been around someone with COVID-19, or is awaiting a test result, do not attend the gathering

CONSIDERATIONS FOR EVERYONE

- Get your COVID-19 vaccine; anyone 16 years and older in Idaho is now eligible for the free and effective vaccine
- Consistently follow any local or state public health orders or advisories in place
- Consider attending an event or gathering virtually if it's an option
- [Wear a face covering/mask](#)
- Keep at least six feet between you and others
- Stay home if you are sick
- Wash your hands often
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Disinfect surfaces and objects regularly
- Take time to care for your mental health – [seek free resources and reach out to others](#)

Resources for Use + More Information:

- Gatherings of More than 50 Attestation Form & Boise City Events Form: <https://www.cdh.idaho.gov/covid-forms.php>
- CDH COVID-19 Directory: <https://www.cdh.idaho.gov/covid.php>
- Idaho Coronavirus Website: <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/>
- City of Boise Public Health Order: <https://www.cityofboise.org/departments/mayor/coronavirus-covid-19-information/public-health-emergency-order-no-20-15/>
- CDC – Guidance for Organizing Large Events and Gatherings: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>
- Mental Health Resources in Idaho: <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/behavioral-health/>
- Mental Health Support – find help and ideas in English & Spanish: <https://howrightnow.org/>